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Rosetta Stone-Language Learning Program

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## **Introduction**

Rosetta Stone is a fairly new, original technology that uses non-traditional methods to teach foreign languages. Rosetta Stone uses a technique that is designed to imitate the way children learn their first language: through immersion, images, and context (Rosetta Stone Inc, 2010). This language program now provides its service teaching over thirty languages in more than one hundred and fifty countries. In 2005, learning a new language was ranked fourth out of the top ten New Year's resolutions. ('Learning a New Language, 2005) Language proficiency has become increasingly important in recent times, not only for job opportunities, but also in social interactions, and international travel. Rosetta Stone is widely used for a number of different purposes including social interaction, professional self-improvement, government use, and traveling purposes. (Rosetta Stone, 2006)

## **Background**

The idea for Rosetta Stone came to Allen Stoltzfus around the 1980's. Having learned the German language through immersion, Allen Stoltzfus came up with the novel idea to use modern-day technology to learn languages the way native speakers learn them, and he partnered with his brother in law, John Fairfield, to work on the computer science aspect of the program. Fairfield and Stoltzfus designed the program to mimic the way children learn their first language; implementing pictures, sound and context to teach language, rather than the traditional translation and vocabulary lists used in schools. During the process of creating Rosetta Stone, Allen Stoltzfus brought in his brother, Eugene Stoltzfus to add architectural and visual genius to their new product. Together, the three men used new technology to create a more natural and effective language-

learning program than any that existed at the time. In 1992, Fairfield Language Technologies was founded out of Harrisonburg, VA, and the brothers named their product Rosetta Stone. (Rosetta Stone was the object that helped linguists finally translate ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics.) Originally Rosetta Stone was only sold in the United States. However, with recent increased demand and a new CEO, Rosetta Stone is now a global company teaching over thirty languages in more than one hundred and fifty countries all over the world. (About Us)

### **Potential Benefits**

First of all, the allure of Rosetta Stone is the non-classroom aspect; many people do not have the time or the money to spend on going to class every week to learn a new language. Rosetta Stone is a program that customers can use at their leisure, on their own time, and do not receive grades for. It is a program that allows the learning of a new language, but does not incur the stress that a traditional classroom setting would cause. Rosetta Stone customers can enjoy the benefits of knowing another language without the cost of paying for a class and also spend less time than would be spent attending a class regularly.

Today's job market has gotten more and more competitive, and with the latest downturn in the economy, there are far less job opportunities and career options. With the useful skill of a second or third language, it would distinguish applicants from the others. Not only would higher language capabilities make it easier to find a job, it would also help applicants get better and higher paying jobs. Furthermore, with the knowledge of two or more languages, employment opportunities would open up not only in the United States, but also in other countries around the world too.

In addition to presenting more professional opportunities, knowing other languages besides English would make international travel much more simple and enjoyable. By knowing the language of a foreign country, international travelers and vacationers would experience a wide variety of benefits. Travelers would be much less likely to get lost in unfamiliar places. Also, without the language barrier, vacationers wouldn't get scammed as often by locals and could get the most out of their trip.

(‘Learning a New Language, 2005)

Finally, if Rosetta Stone or other similar language learning programs were implemented in schools across the country, there would not be such a large discrepancy in education between the United States and other countries. Take Europeans for example, because of the geography of the many, smaller countries in Europe, most young people graduate knowing at least two or three languages (Milan, 2011), as opposed to American students who generally learn just English. America would be much more competitive and the business world would also benefit from our generation of young graduates with more extensive knowledge of foreign languages.

### **Security Concerns**

Rosetta Stone is a marketed product; it is not free. It is available for purchase to anyone, and includes individual buyers as well as large scale buyers-such as whole chambers of government like the US Army. Since Rosetta Stone is a technology based product, there is always a risk of piracy. Since almost twenty-five percent of Internet traffic infringes global anti-piracy laws, this is a very real threat to Rosetta Stone, because if their product gets pirated on a large scale, it would largely cut into their profits.

Rosetta Stone has invested in programs to increase the IP security of the company and keep piracy to a minimum. (Business Wire, 2011)

### **Government Use of Rosetta Stone**

Rosetta Stone's method of teaching language has proven so effective that the United States military has purchased and utilized the language-learning program in numerous international missions. At this time, Rosetta Stone has six different languages to offer to government patrons: Dari, Pashto, Urdu, Arabic (Iraq), Swahili and Bahasa (Indonesia). These programs Rosetta Stone provides to the Armed Forces are customized to include military content and simulate interaction to better prepare them for life overseas. Since 2005, Rosetta Stone has provided language education to over 1.4 million soldiers and civilians. By learning the languages of the countries they will be deployed to, the Armed Forces can better carry out their missions as well as avoid miscellaneous issues in communication between the US military and citizens of the countries being occupied by our forces. By delivering language education to the US military, Rosetta Stone is advancing our national defense and also might be prove useful in improving our country's foreign relations and global security. (Rosetta Stone Inc, 2010)

### **Further Required Research**

Further research may still be required on other language programs that compete with Rosetta Stone. Rosetta Stone is the leader of language learning programs; however, there may be evolving programs out there that could possibly surpass Rosetta Stone in new methods of language education or that could provide languages that Rosetta Stone does not currently provide. In addition, the use of Rosetta Stone in classroom settings in the United States has emerged, but is fairly new so additional information about its

effectiveness in schools would also be relevant to the expansion of the company.

Another related topic not included is the cost of the different languages and levels of Rosetta Stone.

### **Conclusion**

Rosetta Stone is an innovative company that has grown steadily in the years since its development. By using non-traditional education methods to teach languages, Rosetta Stone sets itself apart from the many other language programs and has also proven more effective than any of the other language education programs. Rosetta Stone is a relatively new company but has experienced substantial success, even becoming publicly traded on the New York Stock exchange. With no major problems and only positive results reported, Rosetta Stone is an extremely efficient and successful company that will most likely continue to provide service to current customers and also expand even further in the years to come.

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Rosetta Stone: Foreign Language Skills Key to Improving Career Prospects, survey reveals; 75% of bilingual people claim that having a second language has improved their career prospects; 17% would like to learn Chinese Mandarin in the New Year; 71% would consider online methods of language learning. (21 November). *M2 Presswire*, 1. Retrieved October 10, 2011, from ProQuest

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- This is a valid source of information because I used it for the background of Rosetta Stone and it is the official Rosetta Stone website containing the history of the company.